as a rule possess restless energy and a willingness to differ from his neighbours, and these are frequently neuropathic qualities. The best method of increasing the immediate output of ability would be, in my opinion, to foster the necessary desires amongst the young. The same subject is pursued in "The Production of Ability," which winds up with a plea that the ages of the parents should be registered at schools, so that the effect of this factor on the coming generations could be ascertained. Such an enquiry certainly should be made. The necessity of *only* looking to comparisons between members of the same family, in order to eliminate the effects of the correlation between the characters of parents and their age at marriage, is not insisted on, though very likely not overlooked.

The longest essay is that on "Birth Control," a much disputed subject on which I find myself in general accord with the author, who considers that it has come to stay. I must, however, question the meaning of the dictum "improve environment and reproduction is checked" (p. 223), which seems to be regarded as a law of nature. In the process of evolution a reduction in the number of the family no doubt took place simultaneously with an improvement in the methods of giving the young a start in life, or in their environment. Natural selection favoured this change because the smaller and better cared for families actually produced more survivors than the bigger families. But selection can only act if there is competition, and a general improvement in the environment of a whole nation will have no tendency to make the less fertile types survive. It would, therefore, be a dangerous fallacy to assert that nature teaches us that to improve environment will in itself check the natural rate of reproduction. The high "birth-rate" of the cuckoo as compared with the night-jar, for example, is an instructive fact in this connection. Nature's dictum really is "improve environment and reproduction *may* be checked with immediate benefits." As to ultimate benefits, must it not be admitted that infantile mortality is in some degree selective? If so, the adoption of birth control increases the urgency of eugenic reform. But this review must now cease, for the interest aroused by these essays has already dragged it out too far.

L. DARWIN.

Scott-Elliot, PROFESSOR G. F. *Prehistoric Man and his Story: A Sketch of the History of Mankind from the Earliest Times.* With 64 illustrations and diagrams. London: Seeley, Service and Co.; 1915. Price 7s. 6d.

PROFESSOR SCOTT ELLIOT has performed a useful task in writing so interesting an account of the history of man from the earliest known finds to the early phases of the use of metals. The reader is introduced to the relationships between men and anthropoid apes, to various factors of human evolution, the origin of fire, and the use of tools. The early races of man are well described and are illustrated by several plates depicting restorations of skulls and torsos by M. Mascré under the direction of Professor Rutot, of Brussels. There is a good chapter on the first herdsmen, the introduction of the pastoral art being attributed to the brachycephals (or Alpines). The great spreadings of men in Europe, Africa, Asia and America are indicated with breadth of view and a detail sufficient for the general reader; but, naturally, specialists will not agree with the author in certain of his conclusions, and sometimes he seems to contradict himself. Thus he evidently inclines to the hypothesis, for which there is considerable probability, that the Alpines introduced the Aryan language into Europe, and yet he states that "the Basques are perhaps the most westerly branch of this group," though Collignon has shown that the Basques are a long-headed people—a variety of the Mediterranean race—whose head has been broadened in the temporal region by intermixture with Alpines from the central upland of France.

There are a few slips and mis-statements in the book, but they are not frequent enough to lead the reader far astray; the second column of the table facing page 120 is somewhat obscure. Some of the figures borrowed from "The Childhood of the World," by Frobenius, seem to be inserted because both books are issued by the same publishers. On the whole the book can be recommended as a successful attempt to unfold the early stages of man's physical and mental upward progress, his mastery over his environment, the evolution of arts and crafts, and the migrations of and conflicts between primordial races and peoples.

Parmelee, MAURICE, PH.D. *Poverty and Social Progress.* Macmillan; 1916; pp. xiv. + 477. Price 7s. 6d. net.

THIS is an interesting and careful study of the causes and effects of poverty in modern social structure, with an account and analysis of proposed remedies. The author has drawn largely upon the work of English investigators—Booth, Rowntree, and the Webbs—although in the main he is concerned with the problems to be solved in the United States. This is especially to be seen in the treatment of emigration and immigration and of the difficulties which arise from the complex racial character of the modern American population.

Most social observers will agree with Dr. Parmelee that, after making every possible allowance for the pathological biological factor in population—for abnormal and diseased conditions of body and mind, whether acquired or inherited—the principal cause of poverty is to be found in the mal-organisation of society, and, consequent upon it, in the unfair distribution of the results of the common labour of all. Modern civilisation has lagged behind in its solution of the complex economic problems of social organisation. We may hope to exert some improvement by the segregation of the feeble-minded and criminal types, by better and more accessible medical service, by more comprehensive and thorough education and training; but, essentially, the problems of poverty are economic problems, only to be solved by economic and political changes.

The extent of poverty has been perhaps the most difficult point for the untrained observer to realise. For industrial families in England, it has been estimated that some 25 per cent. of the whole number are constantly living in conditions which make it impossible for their members to receive the nourishment required for normal development. According to Rowntree, the women of these families are in poverty during the greater part of the period that they are bearing children. If more people could be brought to realise what these facts mean, we should have greater attention given to constructive rather than to ameliorative social reforms and experiments.

Dr. Parmelee is not sanguine that the tendency to make government more democratic will make it more efficient. He lays stress on the competence, the special ability and training required in government, and seems to think that democracies have failed in so far that they have not understood the need for these qualifications, and that they are unwilling to delegate a sufficient measure of power to the men they select to represent and govern them.

It is, unfortunately, usual in books of this kind to speak of religion as an obstruction to social reform. Dr. Parmelee considers that in the ideal state "religion will be relegated to its proper place as a part of the outlook of some individuals upon life." Surely this is a confusion of terms and ideas. Religion—the desire to understand and bind together the spiritual and material sides of life—than which no more powerful or deep-seated instinct has been evolved in the human race, is taken to be identical with the customs and ordinances of the various forms of ecclesiastical organisation which are endeavouring, *tant bien que mal*, to interpret the religious instinct in our midst at the present moment.